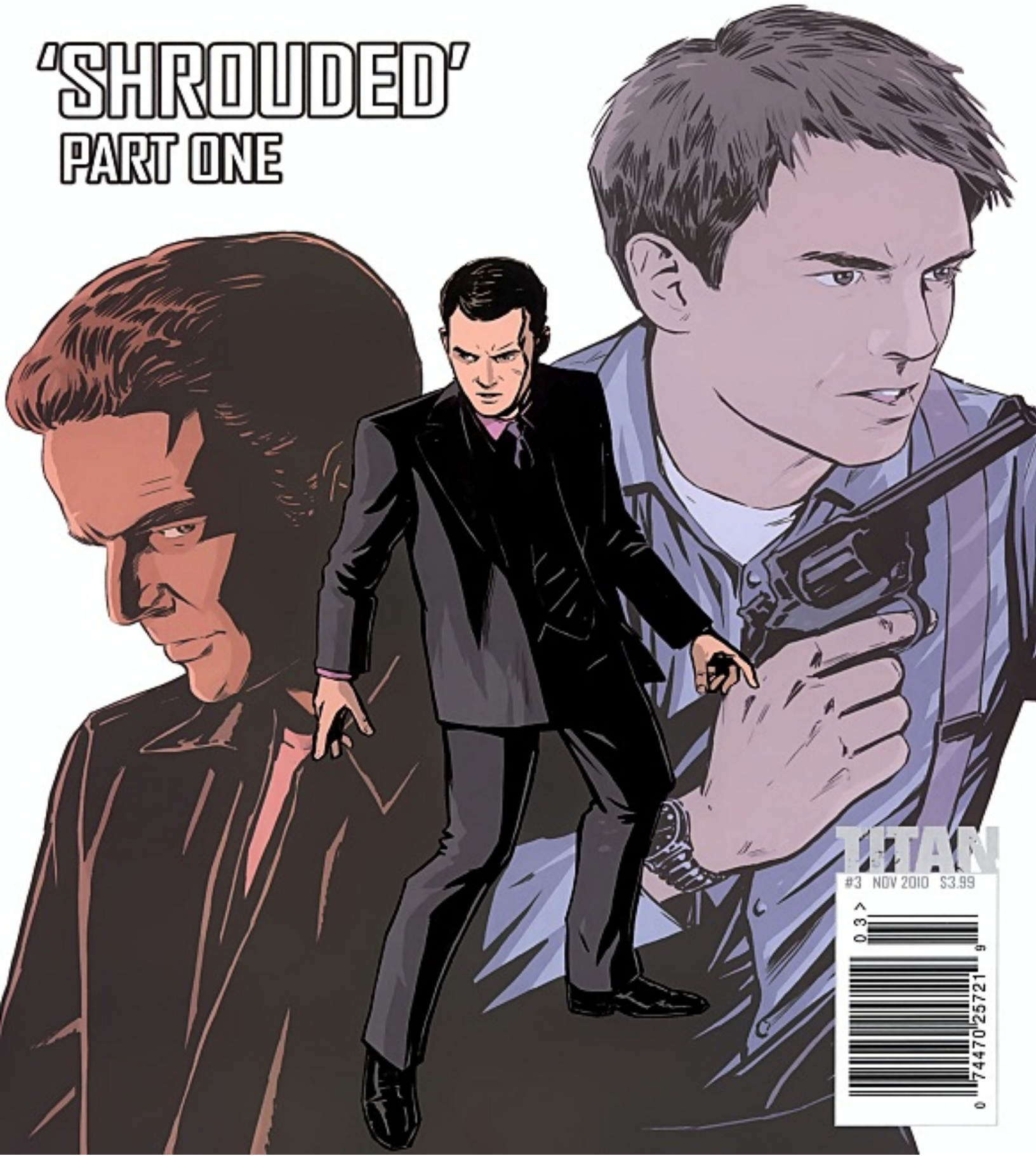
GARETH DAVID-LLOYD & PIA GUERRA

TORCHWOOD

THE OFFICIAL COMIC

'SHROUDED' PART ONE



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TORCHWOOD

THE OFFICIAL COMIC

THIS ISSUE'S STORIES:

'SHROUDED PART ONE'

Story: Gareth David-Lloyd
Art: Pia Guerra
Colors: Phil Elliott
Lettering: John Workman

'BROKEN' PART 3 OF 5

Story: Nick Abadzis
Art: Paul Grist
Colors: Phil Elliott
Lettering: John Workman

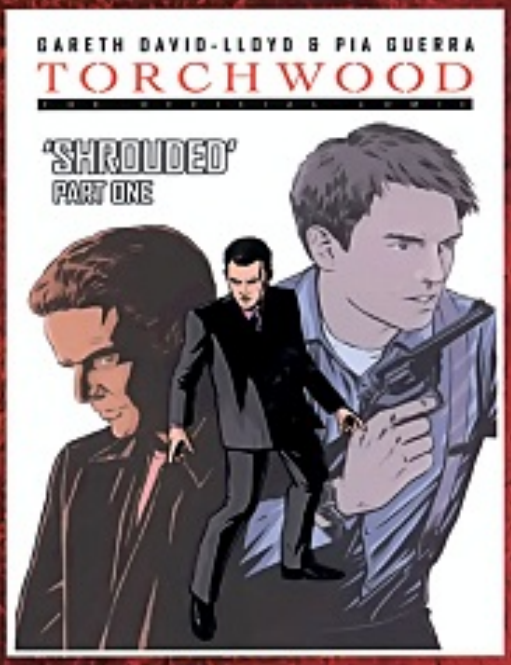
Previously: Jack, Gwen and Ianto are investigating mysterious disappearances at the Clockhouse Hotel. They become trapped there by Bilis Manger and Rift forces, as time distorts around them. Jack asks Bilis how they can escape, but Bilis has disappeared...

SHORT STORY:

'STAKES ON A PLANE' PART 1

Written by James Moran
Art by Ben Willsher

EDITOR MARTIN EDEN
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR CHRIS TEATHER
PUBLISHERS NICK LANDAU & VIVIAN CHEUNG



COVER A
Art by Pia Guerra

COVER B

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SHROUDED

PART ONE

• WRITTEN BY GARETH DAVID-LLOYD • ART BY PIA GUERRA
• COLORS BY PHIL ELLIOTT • LETTERS BY JOHN WORKMAN

CAN I HELP, SIR?
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
...ERM... I WAS JUST ROASTING FOR A GOOD LOOK...
I MEAN... LOOKING FOR A GOOD... UM...
...ROAST?
...MMM... YES.
SO...THE FAVOURITE TODAY HAS BEEN THE BLUE JAMAICAN, BUT IT'S A LITTLE PRICEY.
ACTUALLY, I WAS LOOKING FOR SOMETHING A LITTLE MORE... MYSTERIOUS.
SOMETHING FULL-BODIED ...?
...DARK...
...EXTREMELY TASTY...
WHY DON'T YOU TRY THIS?
WHERE'S IT FROM?
THAT'S THE MYSTERY.

UM, EXCUSE ME?
YOU WANTED SOMETHING MYSTERIOUS. TRY IT. SEE IF YOU CAN GUESS WHERE IT'S FROM. I'LL BE HERE IN A COUPLE OF DAYS, SO YOU CAN COME BACK AND TELL ME.
WHAT DO I WIN IF I GET IT RIGHT?
IT'S A MYSTERY.
MAIRWYN, CAN YOU CLEAN THOSE GRINDERS, PLEASE? PEOPLE DON'T WANT THEIR GOURMET BLENDS BLENDED WITH OTHER GOURMET BLENDS.
MAIRWYN ?
IANTO JONES.
I'LL SEE YOU ON WEDNESDAY, IANTO JONES, AND I EXPECT A FULL REPORT.
MAIRWYN!
I'VE GOT TO GO.
OF COURSE. LAST THING YOU NEED IS A DIRTY GRINDER.
HEHE...
BYE!

ONE HOUR LATER.
Send | Save Draft | Att
To: rhiannon294@compu
Subject: From Ianto
Hey Rhiannon_
IANTO! THIS COFFEE IS DIVINE!
GLAD YOU LIKE IT, SIR.
WHAT HAVE I TOLD YOU?
GLAD YOU LIKE IT, JACK.
SLURP
BEEP BEEP
HEY, IANTO. IT'S RHYS...YOU KNOW, GWEN'S... HUS--BOYFRIEND-- RHYS...HARDWOOD RHYS...GIANT ALIEN WHALE RHYS...
YEAH, I KNOW WHO YOU ARE. IT'S JUST YOU'VE NEVER...
I CAN'T TALK FOR LONG, MATE. LISTEN. DO YOU WANT TO GRAB A PINT? I NEED TO TALK TO YOU. MEET ME AT THE PRINCE OF WALES PUB TOMORROW. ONE O'CLOCK. DON'T TELL THE OTHERS. IT'S IMPORTANT.
OKAY, I...
CLICK

IANTO. GREAT COFFEE, MATE.
WHAT YOU UP TO?
OH, IT'S A GIRL. HEY, LET ME...
"HEY, RHIANNON... I KNOW IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME...
"...BUT I'VE RECENTLY DISCOVERED THAT I'M A BIG OLD GAY. THAT PROBABLY EXPLAINS WHY I COULDN'T GET IT UP."
OWEN, WITH ALL DUE RESPECT...
...PISS OFF!
TOUCHY...

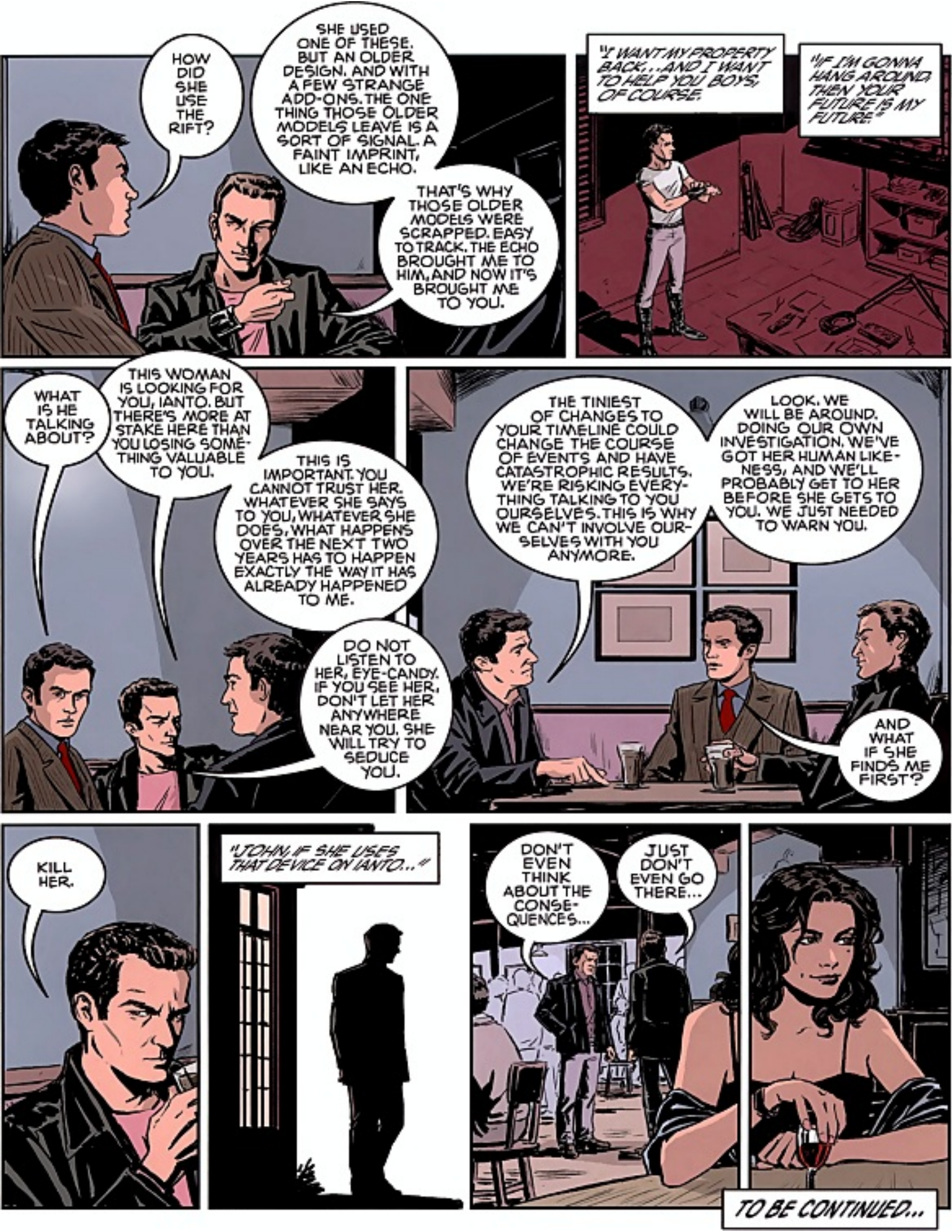
ANY-ONE KNOW YOU'RE HERE?
NO. WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?
BRAINS
IANTO, TWO YEARS FROM NOW, SOMEONE WILL COME TO FIND YOU...
SOME-ONE YOU MIGHT HAVE ALREADY MET...
"SHE WILL LOOK FOR YOU AT TORCHWOOD..."
"SHE WILL GO TO YOUR FAMILY."
WHERE IS HE?
HE'S DEAD!

AND... SHE WILL COME TO US.
WHERE IS THE BOY THEY CALL IANTO?
AND NOW SHE'S HERE.
SHE'S USING THE RIFT?
YES.
IT DOESNT MAKE ANY SENSE. WHY DIDN'T GWEN COME? OR JACK? OWEN? TOSH? ME?
WELL...
"GWEN WAS A LITTLE TIED UP AT HOME...
"AND THE OTHERS ...WELL, I CAN'T SAY."
YOU CAN'T SAY?!
I'M NOT BUYING THIS.

"SO THERE IS A TIME-TRAVELING PSYCHO AFTER ME...
"AND THE ONLY GUY THAT JACK HAS SENT THROUGH TIME TO PROTECT ME IS YOU?"
JACK DIDN'T SEND ME, AND I'M NOT HERE ALONE.
HELLO, EYE-CANDY...
NOT SO FAST. PUBLIC PLACE. LOTS OF POTENTIAL CASUALTIES IF ANYTHING WERE TO GO DOWN.
WHAT THE HELL DOES HE WANT?
YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO LET ME HANDLE THIS.
I WAS BORED. AND YOU WERE LOSING HIM.
WHAT THE HELL IS HE DOING HERE?
IANTO, CALM DOWN. I CAN EXPLAIN.
BUT YOU CAN'T EXPLAIN. IF YOU EXPLAIN... YOU FAIL.

I HAVE NO INTEREST IN WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY.
LISTEN TO HIM, IANTO. HE'S HELPED US BEFORE.
NOT A CHANCE.
PLEASE. EVERY-THING DEPENDS ON IT.
HAVE YOU SEEN THIS... WOMAN?
NO.
TAKE A GOOD LOOK, EYE-CANDY.
PLEASE, IANTO.
I DON'T KNOW HER.
THERE'S NOTHING FAMILIAR?
I HAVE A PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY, RHYS. I'VE NEVER SEEN THIS WOMAN IN MY LIFE.
WHO IS SHE?
SHE'S A THIEF AND AND A LIAR AND A WHORE. AND *YEAH*, SHE'LL PROBABLY LOOK COMPLETELY DIFFERENT NOW...
OH, CALM DOWN. THERE'S MORE AT STAKE HERE THAN YOUR BROKEN HEART OR PRIDE, I... SHOULD SAY.

SHE WAS A DRIFTER I MET IN MEXICO WHEN I WAS THERE ...ON BUSINESS. SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL, SWEET, ADVENTUROUS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT. BEATRICE WAS PERFECT.
"GET ON WITH IT..."
"A COUPLE OF DAYS DOWN THE LINE, I BECAME AWARE THAT SHE WASN'T JUST A DRIFTER OF THE 2010 VARIETY.
"AND SHE CERTAINLY WASN'T A STUDENT FROM OXFORD WHOSE GAP YEAR HAD TAKEN A WRONG TURN."
SHE FOUND MY SHOP.
SHOP ?
HOW DO YOU THINK I MAKE A LIVING ON THIS FINANCIALLY IMPOTENT ROCK, EYE-CANDY? I BUY AND SELL ALIEN ARTIFACTS. THAT'S WHY I MOVED TO MEXICO. THERE'S A SMALL RIFT JUST OFF THE GULF. IT'S MY TUBE TO WORK.
"YOU MEAN STEAL AND SELL ALIEN ARTIFACTS."
IANTO, I AM NOT THE MAN YOU THINK, YOU KNOW. I AM CHANGED.
A BIT.
YOU WERE SAYING...
I CAUGHT HER.
"AND THEN SHE DISAPPEARED...
"...TAKING WITH HER MY MOST VALUABLE PIECE."


HOW DID SHE USE THE RIFT?
SHE USED ONE OF THESE. BUT AN OLDER DESIGN. AND WITH A FEW STRANGE ADD-ONS. THE ONE THING THOSE OLDER MODELS LEAVE IS A SORT OF SIGNAL. A FAINT IMPRINT, LIKE AN ECHO.
THAT'S WHY THOSE OLDER MODELS WERE SCRAPPED. EASY TO TRACK. THE ECHO BROUGHT ME TO HIM, AND NOW IT'S BROUGHT ME TO YOU.
"I WANT MY PROPERTY BACK... AND I WANT TO HELP YOU BOYS, OF COURSE.
"IF I'M GONNA HANG AROUND THEN YOUR FUTURE IS MY FUTURE."
WHAT IS HE TALKING ABOUT?
THIS WOMAN IS LOOKING FOR YOU, IANTO. BUT THERE'S MORE AT STAKE HERE THAN YOU LOSING SOMETHING VALUABLE TO YOU.
THIS IS IMPORTANT. YOU CANNOT TRUST HER. WHATEVER SHE SAYS TO YOU, WHATEVER SHE DOES, WHAT HAPPENS OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS HAS TO HAPPEN EXACTLY THE WAY IT HAS ALREADY HAPPENED TO ME.
DO NOT LISTEN TO HER, EYE-CANDY. IF YOU SEE HER, DON'T LET HER ANYWHERE NEAR YOU. SHE WILL TRY TO SEDUCE YOU.
THE TINIEST OF CHANGES TO YOUR TIMELINE COULD CHANGE THE COURSE OF EVENTS AND HAVE CATASTROPHIC RESULTS. WE'RE RISKING EVERYTHING TALKING TO YOU OURSELVES. THIS IS WHY WE CAN'T INVOLVE OURSELVES WITH YOU ANYMORE.
LOOK. WE WILL BE AROUND. DOING OUR OWN INVESTIGATION. WE'VE GOT HER HUMAN LIKENESS, AND WE'LL PROBABLY GET TO HER BEFORE SHE GETS TO YOU. WE JUST NEEDED TO WARN YOU.
AND WHAT IF SHE FINDS ME FIRST?
KILL HER.
"JOHN, IF SHE USES THAT DEVICE ON IANTO..."
DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES...
JUST DON'T EVEN GO THERE...
TO BE CONTINUED...

THOUGHT I WAS SEEING THINGS, JACK... BUT THAT WAS BILIS MANGER ...?
YUP. THAT WAS HIM, ALL RIGHT...PLAYING HIS USUAL GAMES.
NOT SURE IF HE'S BEHIND ALL THIS, OR IF HE'S A PAWN, TOO.
HOW CAN YOU TRUST THE WORD OF A HABITUAL LIAR?
...WILL SOMEONE PLEASE EXPLAIN WHAT'S HAPPENING?
OKAY, YOLANDE. I'M NOT SURE ANYONE CAN EXPLAIN WHAT'S GOING ON HERE. BUT IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU TRUST US AND DO EXACTLY WHAT WE TELL YOU TO DO, UNDERSTAND?
YES... I JUST WANT TO FIND MY DARREN...MY HUSBAND...
BILIS IS THE KEY TO ALL THIS... AT LEAST, HE'S GOT A KEY.
WE NEED TO FIND HIM.
NOW.
WELL, IF ANYONE CAN GET US OUT OF THIS, IT'S JACK.
ELSEWHERE...
MUUUM... I'M SCARED.
WEIRD... THEY DON'T SEEM TO BE FOLLOWING...
WHAT ARE THOSE THINGS?
ALISON... YOU AND THE KIDS STAY WITH ME. WHATEVER HAPPENS...
THE LIGHTS...! WHAT'S HAPPENING? IT'S GETTING DARKER...
MUUUM...
STAY CALM... STAY TOGETHER!
YES, STAY CALM, GWEN...
MUST STAY CALM FOR THEM.

THAT'S WHAT JACK WOULD DO.
JUST TRY TO FORGET THAT CHILDHOOD FEAR OF THE DARK...
...THE FEAR THAT KNOWS YOU'RE BLIND...
...THE FEAR THAT TELLS YOU THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE BLACKNESS THAT SURROUNDS YOU, SOMETHING YOU CAN'T SEE...
...SOMETHING THAT WHISPERS PAST, FLUTTERING JUST INCHES FROM YOUR FACE, SOMETHING THAT BREATHES ON YOUR SKIN WITH COLD, RANK BREATH...
MUUUUUUM!
..STAY CALM!
SAM...! SAM, GRAB CARON!
CAN'T ...CAN'T FIND HER.
SOMETHING UNDEAD, THAT SHOULDN'T BREATHE...
BUT DOES.

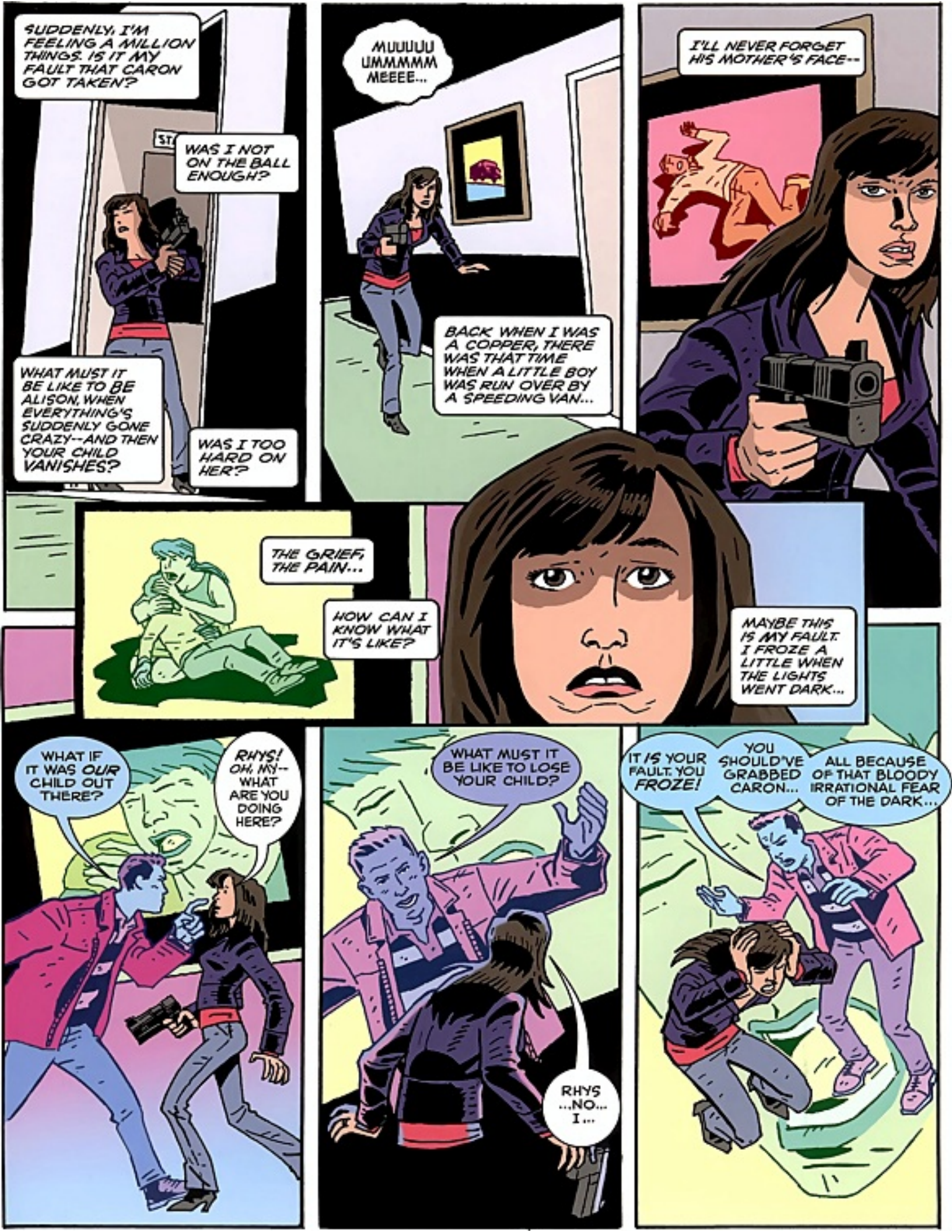
BROKEN

- WRITTEN BY NICK ABADZIS
- ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL GRIST
- COLORING BY PHIL ELLIOTT
- LETTERING BY JOHN WORKMAN

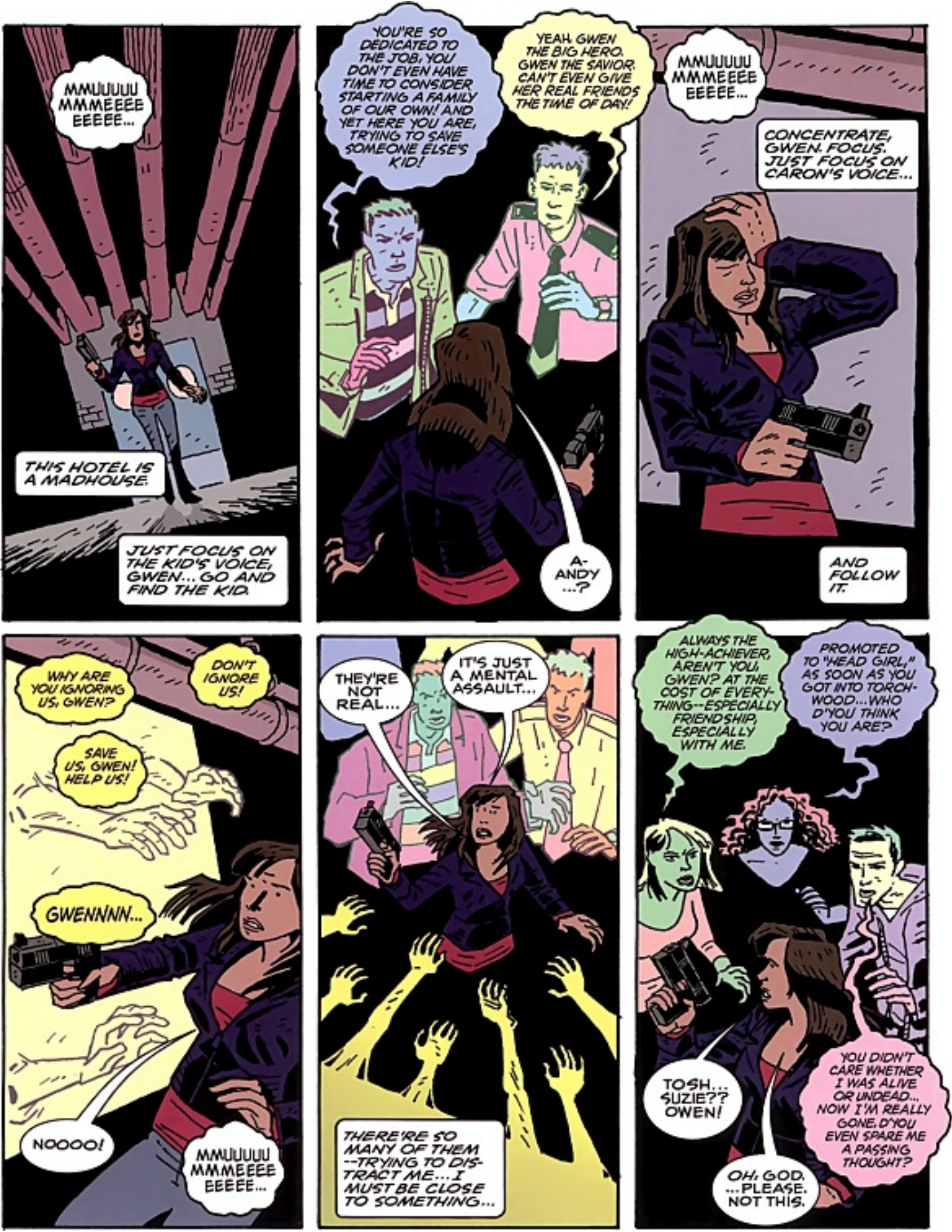
PART 3 OF 5

SOMETHING THAT STEALS A TINY PART OF LIFE FROM YOU...
MMM MUUUUU UUUUUU UUMMM...
CARON? CARON!
ALISON, STAY CALM! KEEP HOLD OF MY--
...HAND ...?
...UNTIL THE LIGHTS COME ON.
OHMY GODOHMY GODOHMY GOD
SAM, WHAT DID YOU DO? DID YOU LET GO OF YOUR SISTER'S HAND?
NO, MUM. I-I DIDN'T EVEN CATCH HOLD OF IT...
EASY, ALISON. IT'S NOT HIS FAULT.
SHE'S LOSING IT.
NOT HIS FAULT? WHOSE FAULT WAS IT, THEN? YOURS? CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT THE HELL IS HAPPENING HERE?
C'MON, GWEN. YOU'VE GOT TO KEEP THIS TOGETHER.
LISTEN TO ME.
IF YOU WANT TO GET OUT OF THIS ALIVE, YOU'LL DO EVERYTHING I SAY.
PWAK
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO EXPLAIN. YOU JUST HAVE TO TRUST ME. I'M GOING TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE, BUT YOU HAVE TO DO WHAT I TELL YOU TO DO, UNDERSTAND?
Y-YES.
I'M SORRY I HAD TO DO THAT, BUT YOU WERE GETTING HYSTERICAL.
I PROMISE I'LL FIND CARON. AND I'LL GET YOU ALL OUT OF HERE. I NEED TO FIND MY FRIENDS...
MUUUUU UMMMMM MEEEEE...
AT LEAST WE KNOW SHE HASN'T GONE FAR.
CARON! OH, BABY...

ALISON, SAM... I WANT YOU TO STAY HERE. I'M GOING TO FIND CARON. I'LL BE BACK FOR YOU AS SOON AS I CAN.
DO NOT MOVE FROM HERE, UNDERSTAND?
OKAY... WE WON'T.
COME BACK SOON, YEAH?
MUUUUU UUUMMM MMEEE...
WHEREVER CARON IS, SOMEONE-- SOMETHING TOOK HER.
MUUUUU UUUMMM MMEEE...
MUUUUU UUUMMM MMEEE...
SOUNDS LIKE IT'S COMING FROM BELOW...
MAYBE... IF I'M LUCKY, I CAN FIND JACK AND IANTO AT THE SAME TIME...
SO, LET'S THINK... WHERE WOULD BILIS BE...?
WELL, HE'S GOT A HUGE SENSE OF HIS OWN IMPORTANCE.
FRONT DESK...?
MANAGER'S OFFICE...?
CONFERENCE ROOMS...?
MUUUUU UUUMMM MMEEE...
SOUNDS LIKE A KID.
WHAT'S THAT?
COULD BE BAIT. WE'VE ALREADY WALKED INTO A TRAP WITHIN A TRAP..
LET'S STICK TO THE ORIGINAL PLAN.
HE LIKES TO BE THE CENTER OF ATTENTION...
LET'S TRY THE CONFERENCE ROOM.

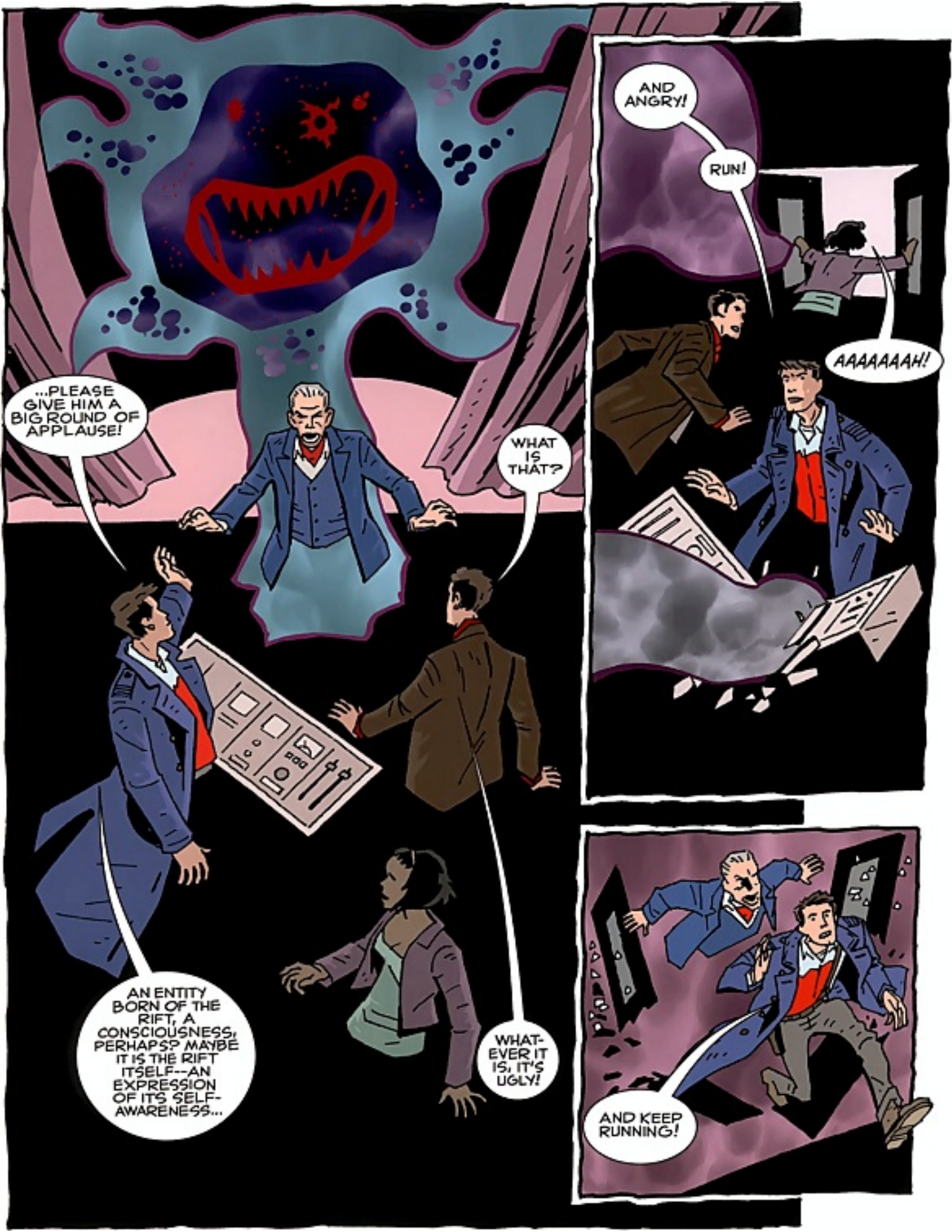

SUDDENLY, I'M FEELING A MILLION THINGS. IS IT MY FAULT THAT CARON GOT TAKEN?
WAS I NOT ON THE BALL ENOUGH?
WHAT MUST IT BE LIKE TO BE ALISON, WHEN EVERYTHING'S SUDDENLY GONE CRAZY--AND THEN YOUR CHILD VANISHES?
WAS I TOO HARD ON HER?
MUUUUU UMMMMM MEEEE...
BACK WHEN I WAS A COPPER, THERE WAS THAT TIME WHEN A LITTLE BOY WAS RUN OVER BY A SPEEDING VAN...
I'LL NEVER FORGET HIS MOTHER'S FACE--
THE GRIEF, THE PAIN...
HOW CAN I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE?
MAYBE THIS IS MY FAULT. I FROZE A LITTLE WHEN THE LIGHTS WENT DARK...
WHAT IF IT WAS OUR CHILD OUT THERE?
RHYS! OH, MY-- WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
WHAT MUST IT BE LIKE TO LOSE YOUR CHILD?
RHYS ...NO... I...
IT IS YOUR FAULT. YOU FROZE!
YOU SHOULD'VE GRABBED CARON...
ALL BECAUSE OF THAT BLOODY IRRATIONAL FEAR OF THE DARK...

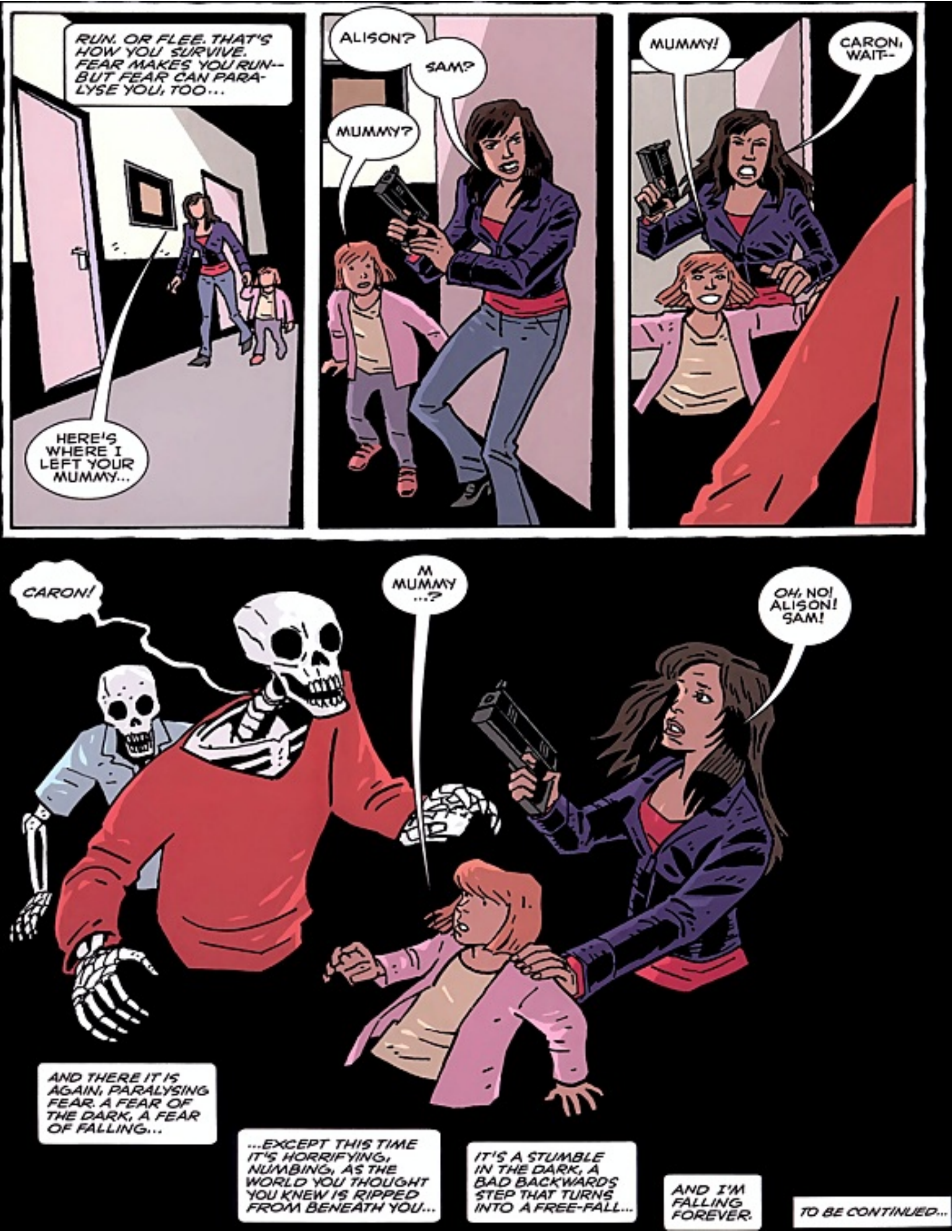
WAIT A MINUTE... WHAT FEAR OF THE DARK?
I'VE NEVER BEEN AFRAID OF THE DARK...!
ALL IN MY MIND.
IT MUST BE THIS PLACE... IT'S MAKING ME FEEL...
MMMUUU UUUUUUUM MMEEEE...
COME ON, GWEN. KEEP ON TOP OF IT, GIRL.
LLANDAFF CONFERENCE ROOMS
THEY SEEM TO BE CONCENTRATED AROUND HERE. PERHAPS THEY'RE PROTECTING SOMETHING.
TOO MANY OF THOSE THINGS AROUND FOR MY LIKING.
BILIS ...?
MAYBE. BUT I'M NOT CONVINCED HE'S THE PUPPET MASTER THIS TIME.
WHAT ARE THOSE SKELETON THINGS, ANYWAY?
GOOD QUESTION, JACK?
I HAVE A THEORY...
...BUT YOU'RE GONNA HATE IT.
ON THE OTHER HAND, "BILIS GOT TALENT" HERE'S GONNA LOVE IT...


MMUUUUU MMMEEEE EEEEE...
THIS HOTEL IS A MADHOUSE.
JUST FOCUS ON THE KID'S VOICE, GWEN... GO AND FIND THE KID.
YOU'RE SO DEDICATED TO THE JOB, YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TIME TO CONSIDER STARTING A FAMILY OF OUR OWN! AND YET HERE YOU ARE, TRYING TO SAVE SOMEONE ELSE'S KID!
YEAH. GWEN THE BIG HERO. GWEN THE SAVIOR. CAN'T EVEN GIVE HER REAL FRIENDS THE TIME OF DAY!
A-ANDY ...?
MMUUUUU MMMEEEE EEEEE...
CONCENTRATE, GWEN. FOCUS. JUST FOCUS ON CARON'S VOICE...
AND FOLLOW IT.
WHY ARE YOU IGNORING US, GWEN?
DON'T IGNORE US!
SAVE US, GWEN! HELP US!
GWENNNN...
NOOOO!
MMUUUUU MMMEEEE EEEEE...
THEY'RE NOT REAL...
IT'S JUST A MENTAL ASSAULT...
THERE'RE SO MANY OF THEM --TRYING TO DISTRACT ME... I MUST BE CLOSE TO SOMETHING...
ALWAYS THE HIGH-ACHIEVER, AREN'T YOU, GWEN? AT THE COST OF EVERYTHING--ESPECIALLY FRIENDSHIP, ESPECIALLY WITH ME.
PROMOTED TO "HEAD GIRL," AS SOON AS YOU GOT INTO TORCHWOOD...WHO D'YOU THINK YOU ARE?
TOSH... SUZIE?? OWEN!
YOU DIDN'T CARE WHETHER I WAS ALIVE OR UNDEAD... NOW I'M REALLY GONE. D'YOU EVEN SPARE ME A PASSING THOUGHT?
OH, GOD. ...PLEASE. NOT THIS.

BAM
BAMMMMM
YOU'RE NOT REAL!
THAT'S IT. THINK. STAY GROUNDED.
HOW CAN THEY BE YOUR FRIENDS? CLEAR YOUR HEAD.
AND AS THE ECHOES OF THE GUNSHOT FADE, THE PHANTOMS VANISH WITH THEM...
AND THERE'S JUST THE SOUND OF A CRYING, FRIGHTENED CHILD.
I--I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO SHOOT ME. YOU WERE WAVING THAT BIG GUN AROUND...
NO, SWEETHEART. I'M HERE TO TAKE YOU BACK TO YOUR MUMMY.
MY GOD... HER HAND!
I HAVE TO FIND JACK.
HOW DID YOU GET DOWN HERE, CARON?
IT ALL WENT BLACK, AND SOMETHING GRABBED ME... I THOUGHT IT WAS SAM, BUT THEN I WAS HERE, AND I TRIED TO HIDE FROM THOSE SKELETON PEOPLE...

WELL, YOU WERE VERY BRAVE.
YOU DIDN'T GIVE IN TO THE FEAR...
STAIRS
GIVING INTO THE FEAR.
MAYBE THAT'S THE KEY TO THIS...
JAAAAAACK...
WELL, WE FOUND BILIS-- SORT OF. WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM?
I DON'T THINK THAT'S BILIS. AT LEAST NOT THE ONE WE WERE TALKING TO EARLIER...
THERE'S MORE THAN ONE BILIS?
JAAAAAACK... COME CLOSE...
I THINK IT'S BAIT. STAND WELL CLEAR.
THE BILIS WE KNOW IS A BIT MORE ARTICULATE THAN THIS GUY, WOULDN'T YOU AGREE?
LADIES AND GENNEL-MEN...
CURTAINS


...PLEASE GIVE HIM A BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE!
WHAT IS THAT?
AN ENTITY BORN OF THE RIFT, A CONSCIOUSNESS, PERHAPS? MAYBE IT IS THE RIFT ITSELF--AN EXPRESSION OF ITS SELF-AWARENESS...
WHAT-EVER IT IS, IT'S UGLY!
AND ANGRY!
RUN!
AAAAAAAH!
AND KEEP RUNNING!


RUN. OR FLEE. THAT'S HOW YOU SURVIVE. FEAR MAKES YOU RUN-- BUT FEAR CAN PARA-LYSE YOU, TOO...
HERE'S WHERE I LEFT YOUR MUMMY...
ALISON?
SAM?
MUMMY?
MUMMY!
CARON, WAIT--
CARON!
M MUMMY ...?
OH, NO! ALISON! SAM!
AND THERE IT IS AGAIN, PARALYSING FEAR. A FEAR OF THE DARK, A FEAR OF FALLING...
...EXCEPT THIS TIME IT'S HORRIFYING, NUMBING, AS THE WORLD YOU THOUGHT YOU KNEW IS RIPPED FROM BENEATH YOU...
IT'S A STUMBLE IN THE DARK, A BAD BACKWARDS STEP THAT TURNS INTO A FREE-FALL...
AND I'M FALLING FOREVER.
TO BE CONTINUED...

STAKES ON A

PART 1

WRITTEN BY JAMES MORAN • ART BY BEN WILLSHER

"I don't see why we couldn't charter a private jet," said Gwen, shifting uncomfortably in her narrow economy seat.

"Hey," said Jack. "I've seen enough planets die, I'm not going to help kill this one. A whole flight just for three people? Not a chance. We use commercial flights, or nothing at all. I'm trying to be more environmentally friendly."

"Yes," said Ianto. "Apart from all the gunfire, explosions, and the ridiculously huge SUV we drive around everywhere. We could all ride bicycles instead."

"That's different. There's three of us in one car, and we have a lot of equipment."

"Shame," said Ianto. "I'd quite like special Torchwood bicycles. Torchbikes."

Jack stared out of the window, and then a thought struck him. He leaned over, and nudged Ianto. He glanced at the back of the cabin, and coughed meaningfully. Ianto raised a questioning eyebrow. Jack coughed again, louder this time.

"Sorry, I don't speak Cough," said Ianto.

Jack rolled his eyes. "Fine. I was trying to be subtle and ask if you fancied joining the Mile High Club."

"Classy," said Ianto. "Very classy." He looked at Jack again. Shrugged. "Go on, then. I'll go first, you follow me down in a few minutes."

"Honestly, you two," said Gwen. "If you get caught, I'm not with you."

Ianto got up and headed to the back. Gwen flipped through her in-flight magazine, while Jack stared out at the clouds.

Seconds later, Ianto was back.

"Both of you, come with me," he said.

"No thanks," said Gwen. "Me and Rhys already joined that club."

"Just come with me. Now. We've got a problem."

They got up without another word, and followed him to the restroom. When they got there, Ianto checked to make sure nobody else was looking. And then he opened the door to show them.

Inside, a woman lay crumpled up on the ground, dead. Ragged puncture wounds in her neck. Completely drained of blood.

The team were flying back to Cardiff from Amsterdam, where they'd cleaned out a nest of Ferrovores – that was the name Jack had given them, nobody knew what they were really called. They were small, ping-pong ball sized alien parasites that entered the body through the mouth, and took root under the breastbone, right next to the heart. Once they were inside, they took over the host body completely, safe in their protected position. They needed constant supplies of iron, so the host would have to drink human blood to keep the Ferrovore alive. The best way to kill them was by ramming something sharp through them while they were in the host body. You could shoot them, of course, but it was a lot more difficult to aim at a moving target that's inside someone's

PLANE

INSIDE THE RESTROOM, A WOMAN LAY CRUMPLED UP ON THE GROUND, DEAD. RAGGED PUNCTURE WOUNDS IN HER NECK. COMPLETELY DRAINED OF BLOOD.

chest. A knife or stake was usually more effective.

"Like many myths and legends, vampires have several layers of truth to them," Jack had said. "Ferrovores are just one of them."

The team had traveled over to investigate when they found reports of people turning up dead, drained of blood, with bite marks in their necks. The last time Jack had to deal with Ferrovores, they'd wiped out a whole town in Eastern Europe. So when this new nest popped up, Jack was determined to make sure he got them all this time. And he thought he'd managed it, too. Until now.

"Great," said Jack. "One of them must have escaped. It's on board with us now."

"Yeah, but who is it?" said Gwen. "It could be anybody."

"We'll find them," said Ianto. "They need to keep feeding on blood to survive. We'll watch out for them."

"We need to do something now," said Gwen. "We can't just let them feed. There are more than 80 passengers on this flight."

"They'll be easier to spot once they start killing," said Jack.

"True," said Ianto. "But they'll be stronger, too. We can't let them keep feeding, or they'll be too powerful for us."

It was true. Ferrovores secreted a Calcium-like substance into the bones and muscles of their host, elongating and sharpening the teeth, making the body much stronger and faster. It was temporary, and caused terrible damage to the tissue, which was why the hosts only lasted about a day. But while they were alive, they were incredibly strong and fast.

"Brilliant," said Gwen. "If we had even one scanner and a gun, this could be over in two minutes."

They hadn't been able to bring any of their weapons or equipment onto a commercial flight, so a local contact in Amsterdam had loaned them what they needed. But right now, they were unarmed, and unequipped. All they had was the vortex manipulator on Jack's wrist, which wasn't any help.

"Of course," said Ianto, "If we were on a private,

chartered flight, then we'd have all our stuff with us."

"Yeah," said Jack. "And the Ferrovore would still be on this flight, and we'd never know it had come to the UK. It would reproduce, find more hosts, and kill a lot of people. Which will happen if we don't figure out who it is."

They stared at the passengers, from the back of the cabin.

"So what do we do?" asked Ianto. "We land in an hour."

"We've still got our IDs, yes?" said Gwen. "Do we have any authority on a flight? Between countries?"

"Technically, no," said Ianto. "We're flying from Amsterdam, so legally we're either under Dutch law, or the authority of the pilot. Bit of a grey area, though."

"Good," said Jack. "I can work with grey areas." He looked around the cabin, and spotted the nearest air steward, a brunette girl in her 20s. Jack grinned, a hunter spotting its prey. He turned to Gwen and Ianto. "Watch this. I'll have her eating out of my hand."

He flashed her his most dazzling smile.

"Hi," he said. "My name's Captain Jack. From Torchwood. What's your name?"

"Maggie," she said. "What's Deutsch-wood? And are you using that toilet? Only you're all blocking the aisle, and we're about to do Duty Free now, so would you mind just returning to your seats?"

"Yep," said Ianto. "Eating out of your hand."

"Very masterful," said Gwen. "I got weak at the knees, there."

Jack ignored them. He took out his ID, and gave it to Maggie, the smile disappearing. "Okay, Maggie," he said. "Here's what's going to happen. You show this ID to your captain, and tell him to call London and ask the Home Office who I am. We've got an emergency situation, and it's very important that I have everyone's full co-operation."

Maggie took the ID, suspiciously. "Torchwood. Never heard of it."

"Please," said Jack. "Someone has just been murdered, and if we don't act fast, more people will die."

"What are you saying? There's a terrorist on board?"

"Something like that. Please don't scream, but look at this."

He briefly opened the toilet door. Maggie gasped, but didn't scream. She stared at Jack accusingly. "Did you do that?"

"If I did, I'd be pretty stupid showing it to you, wouldn't I? Do I look stupid, Maggie?"

Maggie looked at him, and eyed up his clothes. "No. You do look a bit mental, though."

"This is going really well," said Ianto.

"Please," said Jack. "We have to catch the person who did this before we land."

Maggie took the ID, and pointed to the back of the cabin. "Fine. But wait back there. If you try to come near me when I'm at the cockpit door, I'll scream blue murder."

"Fair enough."

The team waited at the back of the plane.

The captain of the plane and Maggie walked down the cabin towards them.

"I'm Captain Andrew Taylor," said the captain. He handed the ID back to Jack. "Sorry I took so long, but the person I spoke to at the Home Office wasn't your biggest fan. Kept going on about all the trouble you cause."

"Yeah, we have our disagreements," said Jack.

"What's going on?"

Jack opened the toilet door again, and showed him. "We need to find out who did that, and we have less than an hour. If they get off the plane when it lands, we might never catch them."

"My God... You don't know who it is? Not even a clue?"

"No. But we know their friends, and how they operate. Trust me, we'll find them. But you have to let us do what we need to do."

"Fine. Maggie, give them full access, whatever they need. Just don't cause a panic."

"We'll try."

Captain Taylor nodded, and headed back to the cockpit. Maggie stared at Jack, Ianto and Gwen. "So... What do we do first?"

Ianto strolled up the aisle, slowly, talking to each passenger in turn. "Duty free, sir? Madam? Duty free?"

In the other aisle, Gwen did the same, while Jack stood up at the front watching them both, trying to catch any unusual reactions.

"Oi! Oi, you!" An overly tanned yuppie shouted at Ianto.

"Yes, sir?"

"I ordered an orange juice five minutes ago, from the other dizzy tart. Where is it?"

"Sorry about that, sir. I'll go and find it for you."

"Why didn't she bring it? What's her name? I want to make a complaint."

"As I said, I'll go and get your orange juice."

"I'm not letting this go. I want her reprimanded."

"Right."

"It's not good enough, you know. I paid a lot of money for this ticket."

"Yes," said Ianto, bending right down into the man's face, and talking quickly and quietly so nobody else could hear. "And that entitles you to a flight, and a flight only. It does not entitle you to be rude or aggressive to people who are working really hard to deal with annoying idiots like you. Now, if you don't shut up and stop complaining, I'll administer your orange juice as a suppository. How does that sound, sir?"

The man stared at him, terrified. Ianto nodded at him, and walked on. "Duty free, madam? Sir?"

Gwen was having her own difficulties in the other aisle. She was looking for anxiety in the eyes of the passengers, but it's very hard to look at someone's pupils when they're talking to your cleavage. After a few minutes, she took advantage of this, and opened another shirt button, making most of the men – and several women – putty in her hands. This didn't rule them out as Ferrovore hosts, but it certainly made them more amenable to her enquiries...

GWEN WAS LOOKING FOR ANXIETY IN THE EYES OF THE PASSENGERS, BUT IT'S VERY HARD TO LOOK AT SOMEONE'S PUPILS WHEN THEY'RE TALKING TO YOUR CLEAVAGE.

NEXT ISSUE!
The stakes get higher
in the story's conclusion...

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